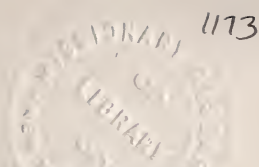


Yam.
Japan



Christian Activity in Japan

By Rev. T. Tan

Francis Xavier was the first preacher of Christianity in Japan. Roman Catholicism spread rapidly in the southern part of Japan, numbering at one time hundreds of converts. The movement, however, because of political complications, was soon stamped out by severe persecution. At present it includes about 400 foreign missionaries, 200 Japanese ministers, and 75,000 members.

Greek orthodox Church dates its origin from the arrival of Father Nicolai to be chaplain of the Russian consulate in Hakodate in 1861. Lately he moved to Tokyo and there founded a large Church, converted very many people. Its communion includes one-foreign missionary, 105 Japanese workers, and about 40,000 members.

In 1859 the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Church, all of the United States of America, began their work through their missionaries in Japan. These were the pioneers of the Protestant Missions in Japan which at present number 45 societies, represented by more than 1,000 missionaries. There are about 1,500 Japanese Churches, of which 350 are self-supporting; 3,000 ministers, of whom 800 are ordained men, and 135,000 communicants.

Protestant Churches are spreading rapidly year by year in their activities in Japan. In organizations and evangelism they made wonderful progress. And now many of them are working together for

the increasing movement successfully. The activities of those Churches are greatly influencing the people for good. Religious education in Japan is very hopeful. In 1920 there was held a great Sunday School Conference in Tokyo, and there were in attendance representatives from many countries in the world. It gave stimulus to religious education among the nation.

Educational work has from the first held an important place. There are many Christian-instructive institutions, kindergartens, boys' and girls' high schools, colleges and Theological Seminaries. After graduating the students are working in the various classes of the society, and are giving Christian influence to them. There are about ten Seminaries, and most of the graduates are working in the evangelistic field as ministers.

Besides Churches there are activities of Salvation Army and Y. M. and Y. W. C. A. The former gives attention to the social problem and the latter especially to the educational works. Some Christians are working for Temperance Societies. The translation of the Scriptures and Christian literature are very effective to lead them to religious thoughts. They have some orphan asylums, hospitals and dispensaries, day and night schools for the poor. The influence of these institutions is recognized by the nation and the Buddhists have been led to imitate them. Thus many who are in need of help may directly or indirectly receive the fruits of Christianity. The foreign missionaries are preaching in the Churches and other meetings and teaching the Bible Classes in the Churches or at their homes. And in this way they meet the Japanese young people.

“As Japan recently had passed through great changes affecting all other departments of human life and thought, the religious beliefs and sentiments of the people could not remain unaffected. The old religions have been subjected to a great strain and have failed to satisfy those who were receiving new ideas from the West. Young people taught the truths of science cannot, as their parents did, bow their heads and worship the rising sun; they cannot go into the Buddhist temples, kneel before images made of wood or stone, and from their hearts repeat the Buddhist prayers. The forms may at times be preserved, but the reality has gone. Hence multitudes of the young men speak of themselves as having no religions. Japan might be described as a nation in search of a religion. Thoughtful men are recognizing that irreligion tends to moral degeneration. Hence many writers for the periodical press are declaring that the great need of the country is religion.”

Christianity in Japan now is the new religion to satisfy those who are searching for a new faith. It is recognized by people to be the new religion to transform Japan.

Now I would like to tell an interesting story. More than 30 years ago, when Dr. Moore was teaching in a mission school in Yamagata City, some people did not like such a school because they did not know about Christianity. But there were some students in this school and they used to fight against the Government High School students. One day, when they fought each other, some of them were caught by the mission school students as captives.

Thirty years passed on, and now we

have a pretty Church building and parsonage in Yamagata City. At the present time those who desire to enter the Tohokugakuin Chugakubu (means High School of North Japan College) can receive the entrance examination in the Churches of their own cities. When I was in Yamagata one day a gentleman came to the parsonage with his boy. He was a medical doctor residing near the city and wanted to send his boy to Tohokugakuin. This doctor told me this story and that he was a student of that Government High School in Yamagata, and he was truly one of the captives on that day.

Since that time he has sent his two sons to Tohokugakuin and his two daughters to Miyagi Girls' School. Not only was this man a captive of the Mission School, but now his four children were brought to such schools to give Christian education.

Our Yamagata Church sent three young men to North Japan College Seminary to be ministers and two young ladies to the Bible Course in Miyagi Girls' School to be Christian workers during the time I was preaching there.
